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Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Report on the visit of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to Gabon*,**

* In accordance with the decision of the Subcommittee at its fifth session regarding the processing of its visit reports, the present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

** In accordance with article 16, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol, the present report was transmitted confidentially to the State party on 7 April 2014. In accordance with article 16, paragraph 2, following the State party's decision of 19 May 2015 to make the report public, the distribution category of the present document is changed from restricted to general.

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I. Introduction

1. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment undertook its first regular visit to Gabon between 3 and 12 December 2013, in accordance with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.[1]

2. The delegation consisted of the following Subcommittee members: Mr. Emilio Gines (head of delegation), Mr. Hans-Jörg Viktor Bannwart, Ms. Suzanne Jabbour and Mr. Fortuné Gaetan Zongo.

3. The Subcommittee members were assisted by five members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including one security officer.

4. The Subcommittee visited 27 places of deprivation of liberty, including police stations, gendarmeries, prisons, a psychiatric institution and detention centres[2] in the towns of Libreville (Estuaire province), Port-Gentil (Ogooué-Maritime province) and Lambaréné (Moyen-Ogooué province). It also held meetings with the competent authorities in Gabon, the National Human Rights Commission, members of civil society and representatives of United Nations agencies.[3] The Subcommittee wishes to thank them for the valuable information provided.

5. During the visit, which was limited in scope and duration, it was not possible to cover all places of deprivation of liberty in Gabon. Nevertheless, the Subcommittee was able to obtain an overall picture of conditions in the country, leading it to conclude that the situation of persons deprived of their liberty is of grave concern.

6. At the conclusion of the visit, on 12 December, the Subcommittee presented its confidential preliminary observations orally to the Gabonese authorities. In the present report, the Subcommittee presents its findings and recommendations concerning the prevention of torture and ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in the State party. The generic term "ill-treatment" is used to refer to any form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[4]

7. **The Subcommittee requests the Gabonese authorities to reply to this report within six months of the date of its transmission, giving a full account of the actions they have taken to implement the recommendations.**

8. This report will remain confidential until such time as the Gabonese authorities decide to make it public, as established in article 16, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol. The Subcommittee wishes to draw the State party's attention to the possibility of applying for funding from the Special Fund established in accordance with article 26 of the Optional Protocol, for specific projects to implement the recommendations contained in the present report, on condition that the report has been made public.

9. **The Subcommittee recommends that Gabon consider publishing this report in accordance with article 16, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol.**

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[1] For more information about the Subcommittee's mandate, please see: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/opcat/index.htm

[2] For the complete list, see annex I.

[3] For the complete list, see annex II.

[4] See article 16 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

II. Access and cooperation

10. The Subcommittee wishes to express its gratitude to the Gabonese authorities for their cooperation and facilitation of the visit. In particular, it would like to thank the Government of Gabon for granting it unrestricted access to places of detention in conformity with the Optional Protocol, and for appointing Ms. Edna Paola Minko, née Biyogou, Director for the Promotion of Human Rights in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, as focal point for the duration of the visit.

11. The Subcommittee notes, however, that the information and documents that it had requested prior to the visit were not supplied until very late, during the meeting held in Libreville on 3 December 2013. The Subcommittee regrets that the late and sometimes incomplete submission of essential information did not allow it to prepare for its visit in a wholly satisfactory manner.

12. The authorities granted access to all places visited by the Subcommittee. Nevertheless, in many police stations and gendarmeries, the Subcommittee had to wait until the officers in charge had confirmed the permission given by their superiors. Moreover, in a number of cases, the Subcommittee faced difficulties in obtaining access to locked places, such as certain rooms or offices, particularly those in which interrogations usually take place or records are stored. On three occasions, the Subcommittee encountered obstruction in attempting to fulfil its mandate. During the visit to the central police station in Port-Gentil on 6 December, the competent authorities attempted to hide the reality of conditions and prevent the Subcommittee members from meeting and interviewing the detainees. It was only after much insistence that the Commander agreed to the Subcommittee's request, and that not without reluctance or fear of reprisals. At the naval base in Port-Gentil, too, the Subcommittee was denied access to the disciplinary cells and the register by the duty officer. In Libreville, while the Subcommittee was carrying out an inspection during its visit to the offices of the criminal investigation department, 12 of the 18 detainees were moved outside the premises to prevent the Subcommittee from interviewing them, contrary to what had been agreed with the criminal investigation officer in charge, who was, for that matter, unable to give any convincing explanation for the transfers. Such behaviour is a serious matter and is a breach of the obligations under the Optional Protocol.

13. The Subcommittee notes with appreciation the frank and constructive dialogue established with the authorities during the end-of-mission meeting, and acknowledges the commitment by the highest levels of government and the strong political support for addressing the shortcomings found.

14. **The Subcommittee strongly encourages the Gabonese authorities to strengthen their cooperation with it in order for it to fulfil its mandate, in line with the international obligations undertaken by Gabon.**

III. General observations on torture and ill-treatment

15. The Subcommittee notes that, despite some measures taken, torture and ill-treatment remain prevalent, driven primarily by some worrying structural and systemic problems linked to:

- Low levels of compliance with the guarantees set forth in the Constitution, international treaties and laws and regulations applicable in Gabon;

- The maintenance and persistence of the confession-based evidence system, which is applied strictly by the criminal investigation police and the judiciary;
- Law enforcement agencies and judicial bodies that base their decisions on confessions, and the lack of effective prosecutorial and judicial control over law enforcement activities;
- The lack or scarcity of resources available to the police forensic service regarding the use of forensic science to produce evidence in criminal proceedings and limit reliance on confessions;
- The lack of access to medical examinations carried out by independent and qualified doctors and insufficient access for detainees to appropriate health care;
- The impunity and general lack of accountability of police and gendarmerie officials;
- Widespread indifference with regard to persons deprived of their liberty and a certain resignation among victims and the public in general;
- The impassiveness and tacit consent of public authorities in respect of inter-prisoner violence resulting from the system of self-management observed in the three detention facilities visited;
- The inherently poor material and financial conditions in places of deprivation of liberty that generally lead to ill-treatment (and can even, in some cases, amount to torture).

IV. National preventive mechanism

16. Gabon acceded to the Optional Protocol on 22 September 2010. Under article 17 of the Protocol, the Government of Gabon was required to establish a national preventive mechanism within one year, that is, no later than 22 September 2011. During its visit, the Subcommittee noted that, more than two years after that deadline, the mechanism had still not been put in place.

17. **The Subcommittee recommends that the State party designate and establish a national preventive mechanism as soon as possible. In that connection, the authorities should take all necessary measures to ensure that the mechanism is in full compliance with the Paris Principles, as required by the Optional Protocol, and with the Subcommittee's guidelines on national preventive mechanisms, particularly by allocating it an adequate budget and guaranteeing the independence of its members. The Subcommittee also recalls that the selection and appointment of members of the national preventive mechanism should be identified by an open, transparent and inclusive process, and that members of the mechanism should collectively have the expertise and experience necessary for its effective functioning.**

V. Substantive issues

A. Normative framework and reliance on confessions as evidence

18. The Subcommittee notes that, generally speaking, the normative framework in Gabon makes it possible to combat torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, although it does have some shortcomings. The Subcommittee observes that Gabon ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 8 September 2000. However, it has not

accepted any of the complaints or inquiry procedures provided for in the Convention. The Subcommittee also observes that Gabon submitted its initial report to the Committee against Torture on 26 October 2011, with a delay of 10 years. The Committee considered it on 8 and 9 November 2012 and formulated its recommendations.[5]

19. The Subcommittee notes that the Constitution of Gabon prohibits torture and ill-treatment in its article 1, paragraph 1, which provides that "no one may be humiliated, abused or tortured, including when under arrest or imprisoned".

20. The Subcommittee notes that Gabon adopted a new Criminal Code in 2011 with the aim of strengthening the judiciary and the rights of the defence. Thus, the Criminal Code refers to torture (art. 253) and provides that the perpetrators of such acts will be punished (art. 228). The Subcommittee is nevertheless concerned that the Criminal Code does not give a definition of torture, which would make it possible to classify torture by its constituent elements and facilitate the criminal prosecution of acts of torture. Similarly, the provisions of the Criminal Code related to the non-justification of torture ordered by a superior officer or public authority were deemed by the Committee against Torture not to comply with the Convention. The Subcommittee also notes that, by Act No. 36/2010 of 25 November 2010, Gabon adopted a new Code of Criminal Procedure, which provides for a number of basic legal safeguards for persons arrested and detained, particularly under articles 50–54.

21. With regard to the submission of evidence, the provisions of articles 313 to 315 establish that any form of evidence, including confessions, may be presented in court, if left to the consideration of the court. Statements and reports only have evidential value if produced in due form. By contrast, statements and reports by criminal investigation officers and officials are considered authoritative in the absence of written evidence to the contrary. Nevertheless, as the Subcommittee explains below, it noted that these provisions are not always applied by the criminal investigation and police authorities. Moreover, the rules on the submission of evidence are not clear enough to suggest that confessions obtained under torture are not declared admissible by courts.

22. The Subcommittee is concerned by information collected during its visit suggesting that some convictions are based on confessions, including confessions obtained under torture. It is also concerned at information received in Lambaréné prison indicating that the prosecutor had prohibited several detainees who had refused to make confessions from communicating with their families for 10 months, in order to "weaken them until they crack". It is also concerned about information collected during interviews in the offices of the Libreville criminal investigation department indicating that persons held in custody had been forced, under threat of torture, to sign records of hearings without having been able to read them.

23. The Subcommittee notes that the heavy reliance on confessions is exacerbated by the lack of forensic equipment, particularly with regard to criminalistics. The Subcommittee considers an evidence-led, rather than a confession-led, criminal investigation to be one of the basic safeguards, as it significantly reduces the risk of ill-treatment of persons in police custody.

24. The Subcommittee was informed that the prison system and the organization of the prison service are governed by Act No. 55/59 of 15 December 1959 and Decree No. 1002/PR/MISPD, on the organization of an independent prison guard service. The Subcommittee is concerned that an act dating from 1959 is still being applied and has not been modified. The Subcommittee was informed that a new text is being prepared containing provisions on the rights of detainees.

[5] CAT/C/GAB/CO/1.

25. The Subcommittee recalls that torture and ill-treatment cannot be justified under any circumstances and must be completely prohibited. To that end, the Subcommittee recommends that the Gabonese authorities revise the Criminal Code to include a provision defining all the elements of torture and criminalizing all aspects of it, in line with article 1 of the Convention.

26. **The Subcommittee recommends that no pressure be exerted to make persons deprived of their liberty confess to an offence. It also recommends that police officers be better trained in methods of investigation, and that police forensic units be given the resources to conduct forensic examinations and analyses, including in laboratories, with a view to recording criminal offences and identifying the perpetrators.**

27. **The State party should ensure that confessions are not obtained illegally, particularly by means of torture or any other form of inhuman or degrading treatment. The Subcommittee further recommends that detainees be allowed to know and understand the content of any statement or report before signing it, for example by being provided with a copy to read or by having it read to them. The Subcommittee also recommends that the authorities amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to state explicitly that confessions obtained illegally, particularly under torture, cannot have evidential value in court. Lastly, the Subcommittee recommends that all necessary measures be taken to ensure that any statement found to have been obtained under torture cannot be invoked as evidence in any proceedings, except against a person accused of torture.**

B. Institutional framework and impunity

28. The Subcommittee notes that Gabon has a Ministry of Justice that must ensure the effective functioning of judicial institutions and the prison administration. The Subcommittee also notes that the Ministry of Justice has a department tasked with the promotion and protection of human rights. The criminal justice system is essentially composed of correctional courts, the correctional chamber of the Court of Appeal, special criminal courts and the Criminal Court.

29. The Subcommittee notes that a National Human Rights Commission was established by Act No. 19/2005 of 3 January 2006. Its responsibility is to examine human rights violations on its own initiative and to receive individual complaints. The Subcommittee observes, however, that the Commission was set up only in February 2012, by the decree appointing its members. The Subcommittee notes that the Commission carried out a number of visits to places of deprivation of liberty. In that connection, the Subcommittee regrets the delay in establishing the Commission, which was not yet fully operational at the time of the visit, particularly because of the lack of appropriate premises and the shortage of financial and human resources at its disposal.

30. The Subcommittee was informed that Gabon had adopted the Judicial Protection of Minors Act No. 39/2010 of 25 November 2010, which contains provisions and establishes autonomous bodies contributing to the administration of juvenile criminal justice, in addition to protection measures to encourage rehabilitation and social reintegration. The Subcommittee was also informed that there are not enough specialized juvenile judges for the whole country, and that minors in conflict with the law are sent back to their families or to NGO reception centres. Consequently, the Subcommittee is concerned by the lack of State structures for minors in conflict with the law (see also paras. 85–86).

31. The Subcommittee observes that there are judicial review mechanisms that help to combat impunity, particularly through the referral of cases to courts. It notes,

however, that these mechanisms are not very effective, and that people are not informed of the possibility of lodging a complaint if they have been subjected to ill-treatment. The Subcommittee was informed that there are complaint mechanisms in prisons, but that, in reality, they are weak and ineffective. Although it was informed by the authorities of the existence of judicial and disciplinary penalties for ill-treatment, consultation of the registers and interviews conducted by the Subcommittee did not confirm that any complaints had been made, nor even that penalties had been imposed on offending agents. Worse still, the Subcommittee is concerned at the general climate of impunity that seems to prevail in places of deprivation of liberty. This climate is liable to facilitate, or even encourage, the practice of ill-treatment.

32. **The Subcommittee recommends that the Gabonese authorities make the National Human Rights Commission fully functional by allocating the resources necessary to its operation, and by ensuring that it complies fully with the Paris Principles. The Subcommittee also recommends that the Gabonese authorities continue to train juvenile judges and recruit enough of them to guarantee their presence in all criminal courts. It further recommends that Gabon establish reception facilities for minors in conflict with the law as soon as possible, and avoid custodial measures. The Subcommittee finds that the climate of impunity is inadmissible and recommends that the authorities take urgent steps to improve the complaints mechanisms for reporting ill-treatment, foster widespread awareness of them, facilitate such complaints and take active steps to ensure that acts of torture committed by police officers, gendarmerie officers and other responsible officials are prosecuted and punished.**

C. Basic legal safeguards

33. The Subcommittee observes that the State party's legislation, despite not complying fully with the Convention, nonetheless provides for the observance of basic legal safeguards for persons deprived of their liberty.

Right to be informed of one's rights and the reasons for one's arrest

34. Article 51 of Act No. 36/2010 of 25 November 2010 establishing the Code of Criminal Procedure of Gabon stipulates that all persons placed in police custody must be informed of their rights immediately, either by the criminal investigation officer personally or under his or her control, and that this should be mentioned in the police report, which must be signed by the detainee. Nevertheless, the Subcommittee is concerned that interviews with a large number of persons held in custody consistently indicate that, during arrest, placement in custody and the hearing conducted by or under the control of the criminal investigation officer, these persons were not duly informed of their rights.

35. **The State party should ensure that instructions are issued to all officers responsible for arresting persons and taking them into police custody, to the effect that persons deprived of their liberty must be effectively and systematically informed of their rights orally and in writing, in a language that they understand, immediately on their arrest. These procedures should be duly recorded. Information on these rights should also be made generally known throughout all places of detention, through the use of signs or posters put up where detainees can see them.**

Right to inform a third party of one's detention

36. Article 52 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides that all persons held in custody have the right to inform, by any means, a family member, friend or employer

of the measure imposed on them. The Subcommittee found that this right was applied inconsistently depending on the police station or gendarmerie. Nevertheless, most of the persons held in custody who were interviewed testified that their family or a relative had been informed of their detention. The transmission of information was facilitated by social proximity and did not necessarily result from the criminal investigation officer applying the law. In a few cases, people were refused permission to notify their family or friends. The Subcommittee also noted that many foreign detainees, for instance in the gendarmerie in Bifoun and the Libreville criminal investigation department, did not know whether the necessary steps had been taken to inform their consulate.

37. **The Subcommittee recommends that the authorities take the necessary measures to ensure that all persons held in custody are able to inform their relatives or friends and, in the case of foreign nationals, a representative of the State of which they are a national, of their detention, and that the information is duly recorded in the custody register and the police report, in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure. Moreover, criminal investigation officers should ensure that detainees are duly informed of the steps taken on their behalf.**

Right of access to a lawyer and the legal assistance system

38. The criminal investigation officer must inform the detainee of this right. The interviews conducted by the Subcommittee revealed that persons held in custody are almost never informed of their right to consult a lawyer or the possibility of requesting that they be assigned one ex officio, in line with article 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and that, when they do submit a request, the right is sometimes denied or granted late. The right is therefore not systematically enforced in practice. The interviews conducted by the Subcommittee suggest that access to a lawyer is more common in criminal trials. The Subcommittee also found that there is a shortage of lawyers in small towns, including Lambaréné, making it difficult for the vast majority of detainees to access them, given the costs that can be incurred.

39. **The Subcommittee recommends that the authorities guarantee access to a lawyer to all persons from the moment they are taken into custody and throughout legal proceedings, notably by establishing an effective mechanism to provide free legal assistance. The authorities should consider measures to increase the number of lawyers trained in the country each year and to encourage them to establish themselves in the different regions of the country, and allocate an adequate budget for the free legal assistance system.**

Right to medical examination

40. The right to a medical examination is provided for under article 53 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulates that all persons held in custody must be examined, at their request or that of their family or friends, by a doctor appointed by the Attorney-General or the criminal investigation officer. The Subcommittee noted that access to a medical examination at the request of detainees was not granted systematically, and that there was a lack of medical registers in police and gendarmerie stations. The Subcommittee wishes to draw attention to the importance of a medical examination, since it also constitutes a guarantee against impunity.

41. **The Subcommittee recommends that all persons arrested undergo a medical examination as soon as possible after they are brought into custody, especially if they show signs of ill-health, whether ensuing from their arrest or not. These medical examinations should be free and should be performed in accordance with the Manual on Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol).**

Duration of custody

42. The Subcommittee notes that, under article 50 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the length of custody is 48 hours. It may be extended for a further 48 hours with the Attorney-General's written authorization. The interviews during the visit highlighted the regular failure to respect the time limits on police custody. The Subcommittee did not find, in the registers or other documents, authorizations for the extension of police custody issued by the Attorney-General, and was informed that such authorizations were generally granted orally.

43. **The Subcommittee recommends that the Gabonese authorities strengthen controls to ensure strict compliance with this rule laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure, which constitutes a guarantee for persons deprived of their liberty. A numbered, initialled and standardized register should be put in place to ensure effective monitoring of custody.**

Use of pretrial detention

44. The Subcommittee notes that pretrial detention is governed by articles 115 to 122 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Article 117 stipulates that the length of pretrial detention for ordinary offences may not exceed 6 months. It may be extended for a further 6 months at the request of the Attorney-General. An additional extension is possible on the basis of a reasoned judgement of the Indictments Chamber. In criminal cases, the length of pretrial detention may not exceed 1 year. It may be extended for a further 6 months at the request of the Attorney-General. An additional extension can only be obtained on the basis of a judgement by the Indictments Chamber and may not be longer than 6 months. Nevertheless, the Subcommittee notes with concern that the number of pretrial detainees in Gabonese prisons is very high, and that no alternative measures to deprivation of liberty are applied. Thus, it notes with concern that the prison in Libreville held 1,656 detainees on 5 December 2013, of whom 1,168 were pretrial detainees and 485 were convicted prisoners. The Subcommittee also found that the prison in Lambaréné held 150 pretrial detainees compared to 76 convicted prisoners, and that two thirds of those held in the prison in Port-Gentil were pretrial detainees. Worse still, during the interviews carried out by the Subcommittee, it found that some pretrial detainees had been in custody for several years. It observed that the situation was also due to court backlogs and systematic detention for very minor offences. The Subcommittee is further concerned that provisional release measures are seldom used, and that people are not released as a matter of course when the investigating judge and the Indictments Chamber fail to give a ruling before the expiry of the period of pretrial detention. The Subcommittee fears that the use of pretrial detention is a systematic practice.

45. **The Subcommittee recalls that detention should be used as an exceptional measure, with liberty remaining the rule and detention the exception. Pretrial detention must be used as a last resort, only for the most serious crimes and offences and when there are sufficient grounds to justify it (security, collusion, flight risk, tampering with evidence, etc.). In all other cases, the Subcommittee recommends that the Government of Gabon use non-custodial measures, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules)[6] and pursuant to the Code of Criminal Procedure of Gabon. The Subcommittee also recommends that the Government of Gabon take steps to clear court backlogs.**

[6] Adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/110 of 14 December 1990.

D. Education, training and staff recruitment

46. In prisons, the Subcommittee noted a chronic shortage of staff (for example, the central prison in Port-Gentil had two shifts of 4 officers for 373 detainees) and a lack of staff training. The Subcommittee also observed that there is no requirement for a minimum level of education in the recruitment of prison staff. As a result, according to the testimonies gathered, prison officials do not possess a sufficient level of education, their training is inadequate and they are not up to the task, leading to mistakes.

47. The Subcommittee takes note of recent initiatives in police stations and gendarmeries to raise awareness among staff of the prohibition of torture, in particular by putting up posters on the matter in police stations. It nevertheless notes the inadequacy of these measures and the paucity of the human rights training provided to staff both during courses of study and through in-service training.

48. **The Subcommittee underscores the importance of training law enforcement personnel, especially those involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of detainees. It recalls that, under articles 10 and 11 of the Convention, the State party has the obligation to ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment are an integral part of the training of such personnel and that interrogation instructions and practices, as well as arrangements for the custody of detainees, are in accordance with the Convention. Moreover, the Subcommittee requests that the authorities train criminal investigation officers in techniques for interrogating minors who have committed or fallen victim to an offence.**

49. **The Subcommittee recommends that the authorities incorporate human rights in the study programme for law enforcement officials and prison staff, and that they train judges, prosecutors and lawyers in human rights in the administration of justice.**

50. **The Subcommittee encourages the authorities to revise the recruitment criteria for prison staff by establishing a requirement for a minimum level of education and recruiting more female prison and police officers.**

VI. Situation of persons deprived of their liberty

A. Gendarmerie and police stations[7]

(i) Torture and ill-treatment

51. The Subcommittee notes with deep concern the frequent use of torture and ill-treatment against persons held in custody in police stations and gendarmeries, and their almost systematic use in the premises of the criminal investigation department that the Subcommittee visited. Persons held in custody are routinely tortured, without any specific objective and even before being brought before a judicial authority. During its visit, the Subcommittee heard many allegations and corroborating testimony concerning the methods used, including "the bridge", in which the victim is suspended from an iron bar placed between two chairs and is beaten on the soles of the feet and the legs with machetes, iron bars, electrical cables or plastic pipes, is subjected to electric shocks in the mouth or anus, or even sometimes raped. Witnesses reported daily and almost systematic beatings and sexual violence in the premises of the Libreville criminal investigation department. The Subcommittee was able to attest

[7] The term "police stations" also covers those of the criminal investigation department.

to torture suffered by persons held in custody, including women. The Subcommittee interviewed several defendants in Libreville central police station who showed visible signs of abuse, including a minor under the age of 12, who, at the time of the visit, had not received medical attention. The fact that the basic safeguards described in paragraphs 33–44 above are not implemented facilitates this practice.

(ii) Material and sanitary conditions

52. The Subcommittee found during its visit that persons deprived of their liberty were being held in inhuman and degrading conditions. The Subcommittee is alarmed by the appalling sanitary conditions in most of the custody cells visited. It noted the almost systematic absence of toilets, meaning that the detainees have to urinate in bottles and defecate in plastic bags in front of everyone, as well as the absence of showers, light and ventilation. In general, there are no mattresses or mats, so that detainees have to sleep on the floor. The Subcommittee also found that men, women and children often share the same cell. The Subcommittee was particularly shocked by the material conditions of detention in the Port-Gentil central police station, which it considered appalling. Detainees are held in a cell that has no natural light and virtually no ventilation, and part of which is used as a rubbish dump and area where the detainees "relieve themselves". It is into that part of the cell, which is infested by rats and cockroaches, that the families throw the food they bring for the detainees, through a vent hole more than two meters up in the wall.

53. Most of the police stations and gendarmeries visited did not have a budget to provide food for persons held, meaning that detainees were dependent on their families providing for their needs. The Subcommittee was informed that, in some cases, officers paid from their own pockets for food and water for detainees who were not able to count on their families. This means that detainees can remain without food and with only a very limited quantity of water for several days.

54. **The Subcommittee reminds the State party that, whenever it deprives a person of liberty, it becomes responsible for that person's safety and must provide decent conditions of detention. The Subcommittee recommends that the State party take urgent measures to ensure decent and acceptable living conditions in police cells, including by making sure that the cells are cleaned and ventilated and that food and water is provided to any person held in custody.[8] Furthermore, the State party must ensure the separation of detainees, in particular of women and minors, to guarantee their protection, particularly from physical and sexual violence. The Subcommittee recommends that the State party draw up a programme for the refurbishment of cells in line with international standards.**

B. Prisons

(i) Torture and ill-treatment

55. The Subcommittee was able to see the positive effect of the authorities' commitment to put an end to torture and ill-treatment in prisons, in particular through the recent appointment of new directors who have been given clear and specific instructions in this regard. The directors of the three establishments visited all expressed their intention to make a real difference to the way that detainees are considered and treated and to the management of discipline in the prisons. The Subcommittee was able to see the positive impact of the directors' personal

[8] In line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, specifically arts. 12, 16, 18 and 20.

commitment and the individual initiatives they had taken; this impression was backed up by the testimony of both prisoners and staff.

56. In general, the delegation heard relatively few allegations of ill-treatment of inmates by prison staff. It did however hear corroborating testimony in Libreville Central Prison of the practice of beating up new arrivals, including women and children, and that the prisoners could avoid this by paying a sum of money (see also para. 79). Former detainees also reported that minors were then brought to "old-timers" to be raped. Several allegations mentioned disciplinary measures in the form of severe beatings with whips, belts, canes, sticks or, for women, shaving of the head.

57. The delegation heard a number of allegations of violence between prisoners in the context of the self-management system that was observed in Libreville and Port-Gentil prisons. In particular, it noted that the disciplinary measures are often chosen by the cell and yard bosses and inflicted by other prisoners. The Subcommittee is alarmed by information that vulnerable persons or prisoners who are not helped by their families, in particular minors and foreign nationals, are forced into prostitution to provide for their needs. The death in October 2012 of a 20-year-old prisoner as a result of brutal sodomization, which was reported by the media, aroused much controversy.

58. When the State deprives a person of liberty, it becomes responsible for that person's safety. It has the obligation, inter alia, to protect the person from other persons in custody and to punish the perpetrators of violence, who act with their tacit or express consent. Failure to comply with this obligation is neglect of the duty of care.

59. **The Subcommittee recommends that the State party take all possible measures to put an end to ill-treatment and torture of detainees, in particular by firmly condemning all such acts and establishing a legal framework in accordance with the State's international obligations.**

60. **The Subcommittee recommends that the State party establish a system of independent examinations in which forensic medical examiners and qualified psychologists conduct a thorough investigation each time that there is reason to believe that a detainee has been subjected to torture or ill-treatment. The results of such examinations should form part of a swift, thorough and independent investigation carried out into all cases of alleged and supposed torture or ill-treatment.**

61. **The Subcommittee further recommends that the authorities undertake a fundamental review of the management of prisons to ensure that the prison administration is in control and is able to ensure the safety of everyone inside the prison, including their protection from inter-prisoner violence.**

62. **The Subcommittee also recalls the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979, and the Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa (the Robben Island Guidelines), adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in October 2002.**

(ii) Material conditions

63. The Subcommittee visited three prisons, in Libreville, Port-Gentil and Lambaréné. The Subcommittee is aware that these institutions are only one part of the nine establishments that exist in the country's nine provinces. However, they do constitute a representative sample, both from a structural point of view, since all the

prisons were built during the same period and on the same model, and in terms of the prison population, as they account for 60 per cent of all persons imprisoned in all categories (men, women, minors and foreign nationals).

64. The Subcommittee is extremely concerned by the deplorable material conditions in the prisons visited which, in its opinion, constitute torture. All the prisons in the State party date back to the colonial era: they are old, poorly maintained and totally inadequate as places of deprivation of liberty. In most cases, the cells have very little or no ventilation and, because of this, the temperature can be extremely high, with humidity of up to 70 per cent during the day. Furthermore, they do not have even a minimum of either natural or artificial light, there are no sanitation facilities in the cells and those in the detention yards often do not work properly. In addition, the detainees sleep on the floor on simple mats or dirty old mattresses. The conditions in the disciplinary cell at Libreville Central Prison (6 m^2) are appalling: the heat is suffocating and the smell nauseating, there are no latrines and inmates are thus forced to "relieve themselves" in bottles or plastic bags, the food is passed through a barred window and the inmates have no opportunity to go out into the courtyard. Of the three persons held in the cell at the time of the visit, one had already spent a month there.

65. The Subcommittee is alarmed by the state of sanitation in the prisons visited. In particular, it observed the absence of functional sanitation and sewerage systems and, in Libreville, the existence of uncovered waste bins. The Subcommittee was shocked to see the inmates emptying septic tanks and disposing of the waste with their bare hands. Such conditions mean that the little cleaning and disinfecting that is done is useless, with rats and cockroaches living alongside the detainees and parasitic diseases and skin problems, including scabies, spreading through the prison population.

66. The delegation also heard corroborating accounts that not enough cleaning products were given out and there was a serious shortage of personal hygiene products. Prisoners therefore depend on their relatives to obtain these products, thus creating inequalities between those who have families and those who do not.

67. All of the detainees interviewed by the Subcommittee complained about both the quality and the quantity of food provided by the prisons. There is only a very small budget for food, so the prisoners are just given bread, that is, one baguette per day per person, and a portion of rice with one piece of chicken or fish (sometimes canned or dried). The prisoners are not given any fruit or vegetables. The extremely poor diet is the direct cause of the many illnesses the detainees suffer from. Prisoners who have family nearby thus depend mainly on their relatives to bring them food, while the others never or almost never receive anything and are forced to carry out chores or to provide "services", including sexual intercourse, to their fellow inmates in the hope of benefiting from their generosity.

68. **Pending the construction of modern prisons, the Subcommittee urges the State party to take immediate steps to improve the material conditions in the country's prisons.**

69. **The State party should reduce the length of time that detainees are locked in their cells and ensure that the cells are lit and adequately ventilated.**

70. **The State party should have all prisons in the country cleaned and disinfected. Decontamination measures should also be taken: to prevent the spread of disease, liquid and solid waste and excrement should be collected, treated and disposed of not by the detainees, but by specialized companies. The State party should also ensure that there is a constant water supply in all the prison yards and provide personal hygiene products in sufficient quantity.**

71. **The State party must ensure that the quantity and the quality of food distributed in prisons conform to the relevant international standards[9] and actually increase the food budget so that it corresponds to the number of detainees held, rather than a prison's nominal capacity.**

72. **Given the urgency of the situation, the Subcommittee urges the State party to expedite the projects for the construction of new prisons so that the existing prisons can be closed down as soon as possible. The new prisons should be designed and built in compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.**

(iii) Prison overcrowding and pretrial detention

73. The Subcommittee is deeply concerned by the endemic overcrowding in all the prisons visited, illustrated by the example of Libreville Central Prison, which, at the time of the visit, housed 1,653 detainees for a nominal capacity of 300, an occupancy rate of nearly 550 per cent. Prison overcrowding is such that the yards are often not large enough to accommodate all the inmates of the section at the same time and additional levels have had to be installed in some cells to increase capacity. In Libreville, for example, the Subcommittee visited cells of $16m^2$ in which 22 persons were held for more than 12 hours each day.

74. The Subcommittee notes that the overcrowding is exacerbated by the particularly high number of prisoners awaiting trial. It notes that the warrants of committal issued by the investigating judge do not all seem to state the grounds for committal, thus violating the principles of individual freedom and the presumption of innocence. This is not consistent with the rule of law.

75. The delegation received reports that many prisoners on remand had been held for periods far exceeding the maximum penalty of imprisonment to which they could be sentenced if convicted of the offence with which they stood accused. There can be no justification for holding remand prisoners beyond the period equivalent to the maximum sentence imposable for the offence of which they stand accused.

76. The Subcommittee is concerned by testimonies indicating that detainees have to present the hearing results issued by the court, which is reported as being a real obstacle to their release. It is, moreover, concerned by the situation of detainees, particularly minors, whose death sentences have not yet been commuted following the adoption of Act No. 3/2010 of 15 February 2010 abolishing the death penalty.

77. **The Subcommittee recommends that a concerted strategy be adopted by the authorities to reduce the prison population through a combination of measures, including:**

- **The release of all remand prisoners who have already been in custody for longer than the maximum prison sentence imposable for the offence of which they stand accused;**
- **The use of non-custodial measures for children;**
- **Diversion from custody of persons charged with petty offences through the use of other measures (such as release on bail) or a fine proportionate to the financial means of the individual person;**
- **Conditional release in accordance with articles 121 et seq. of the Code of Criminal Procedure (with or without bail) and the use of pretrial detention only in exceptional circumstances, as stipulated in article 115 of the Code;**

[9] United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, rule 20

- **Increased communication and cooperation between the courts and the prisons to minimize delays in the transmission of judgements and orders, particularly release orders, to ensure that persons are released as soon as the court so orders;**
- **The commutation of all death sentences to life sentences so that there is a possibility of review and eventual conditional release.**

(iv) Internal management

78. In the three prisons visited, the internal management was left to the prisoners themselves, following a well-established hierarchy of cell and yard bosses, sometimes aided by deputies. Prison officers are not always present in the yards, entering only occasionally. In general, the day-to-day management of the prison is left to the detainees, who allocate chores such as kitchen duty, cleaning of common areas and emptying of the septic tanks. The cell and yard bosses in each prison thus enjoy considerable privileges with regard to the conditions of their custody.

79. The lack of material and financial means in prisons leads to a situation where corruption determines the extent of the "privileges" allowed to a prisoner, including the possibility of not being put in an overcrowded cell or the right not to be beaten. Furthermore, the self-management system allows the strong to trade or exchange basic rights against services or favours, including sexual favours.

80. The Subcommittee is concerned by the power that is in the hands of the strongest or richest inmates, who wield it arbitrarily against weaker and poorer inmates, particularly in the area of discipline and disciplinary sanctions. This system of self-management also means that all communication between detainees and the prison authorities passes through, and is filtered by, the cell and yard bosses, making it impossible for inmates to file complaints against them.

81. A certain degree of self-management by inmates can be beneficial so long as it does not take the place of the management that the prison administration in general, and the prison warder/director in particular, are responsible for providing. A self-management system unsupervised by the prison authorities is not acceptable.

82. **The prison authorities must closely supervise the cell and yard bosses (for whose acts they are ultimately responsible) and ensure that only the authorities are entitled to order and carry out disciplinary punishments. Tasks associated with the exercise of official power must continue to be carried out by prison staff. The authorities should ensure that all detainees are treated on an equal basis and that the advantages granted to cell and yard bosses do not exceed those that can reasonably be considered necessary for them to be able to discharge their duties. The State party should also eradicate corruption by punishing the perpetrators and informing detainees and their families of their rights.**

(v) Separation of detainees

83. The separation of detainees by category does not follow a set standard in the prisons visited. In some, specific sections with generally better material conditions of detention are set aside for women, who also have free access to the exercise yard set aside for them. The Subcommittee is however concerned by the fact that minors are not kept separate from adults, which leads to serious abuse, especially sexual abuse. The delegation also noted that untried prisoners and defendants are not kept separate from convicted prisoners.

84. **The Subcommittee recommends that the State party ensure that different categories of detainee are kept separately, and particularly that minors are kept**

strictly separate from adults, in conformity with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

(vi) Children

85. The Subcommittee expresses its concern at the current punitive approach taken towards juvenile offenders, reflected in their frequent detention for minor offences. The Subcommittee is also concerned that there is no emphasis on the educational dimension of the system for minors. In practice, there are few or no educational activities or psychosocial support to help children or adolescents reintegrate into society.

86. **The Subcommittee recommends that children and adolescents only be deprived of their liberty as a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible period of time,[10] and that their imprisonment be reviewed on a regular basis. The Subcommittee recommends that the authorities provide psychological intervention and build up the school and vocational training offered to children and adolescents in detention to prepare them for reintegration in their communities and society.**[11]

(vi) Access to health care

87. The Subcommittee visited the hospitals of the prisons in Libreville, Port-Gentil and Lambaréné and noted the devotion of the prison medical staff, despite the extremely difficult conditions in which they work. The Subcommittee regrets that no structured organization exists to meet health-care needs in the country's prisons. Health care depends on the initiative of the prison director and relies on the goodwill of staff and financial support from the families of detainees.

88. The infirmaries are poorly equipped and lack qualified staff. The only medical conditions actually treated in the prison system are malaria and tuberculosis, although treatment of the latter is often unsatisfactory (see below). Other medical care, including inpatient care, is at the expense of the families of detainees. The only medications given out freely are quinine and paracetamol, which are unsuitable for treating the most widespread needs (skin problems, infections, parasites, gastroenterological problems and neurological problems linked to vitamin deficiencies). Lambaréné prison is, however, an exception, due to the personal initiatives taken by the Director. In view of the prison population and the absence of regular care, the number of temporary transfers for medical treatment is rather low. Some prisons, furthermore, do not have any means of transportation to take the prisoners to the hospital so that visitors are asked for a "contribution" to a fund used to provide services such as taxis for inmates.

89. The Subcommittee is alarmed by the high prevalence of certain diseases, including tuberculosis, in the prison environment. In 2012, for example, over 18 per cent of the prison population of Libreville Central Prison had tuberculosis. The efforts of the nursing staff come up against barriers related to prison conditions, including the lack of isolation wards for the sick, the lack of privacy, lack of ventilation and limited access to appropriate medical care. The Subcommittee is concerned by the emergence of resistant strains, which are becoming increasingly difficult to treat.

90. The Subcommittee observed that the medical equipment was out-dated and there were inadequate numbers of staff, who were poorly qualified, underpaid and

[10] In accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 40/33 of 29 November 1985.

[11] United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, rules 38 and 39.

overworked; there were no specialized mental health staff (psychiatrists or psychologists), despite the alarming levels of suicides, nor any programme for drug-addicted detainees. The Subcommittee is also concerned by the fact that the medical staff are not aware of their responsibility to document cases of torture.

91. In view of the prevalence of certain infectious diseases in prisons, the Subcommittee is concerned by the lack of any preventive treatments such as vaccines and regular screening for medical and security staff in prisons. It considers it unacceptable that the health of the staff should thus be placed in danger and also notes that this situation contributes to the spread of diseases within the broader population.

92. **The State party should ensure that detainees are able to access health care in conformity with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and should therefore immediately increase the budget allocated to detainees' health. The purchase of medications and detainees' hospital fees should be covered by the prison authorities. The State party should take the necessary measures to ensure that every prison has regular access to the services of a qualified doctor, who should examine each detainee as soon as possible after his or her admission and monitor the physical and mental health of detainees, particularly by establishing medical files for each person committed to prison.[12] Strategies to prevent suicide among detainees should also be developed in consultation with the mental health care and social protection services.[13] The State party should moreover provide adequate means of transport for prisoners requiring hospitalization. Persons with disabilities should be held in decent conditions appropriate to their disabilities.**

93. **The Subcommittee recommends that the State party conduct systematic screening for tuberculosis. After the screening test, sick prisoners should receive for free the medicine necessary for their treatment. To prevent the spread of diseases in the prison environment and to encourage the treatment of sick prisoners, all the country's prisons should also provide quarters for sick and convalescing prisoners. The Subcommittee urges the State party to have all prison medical and security staff vaccinated and to carry out medical screening tests, which will need to be repeated at regular intervals. It recommends that the authorities seek the assistance and cooperation of the World Health Organization in implementing these actions.**

94. **The Subcommittee recommends that the State party train medical staff to examine alleged victims of torture or ill-treatment and to detect such cases, in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Protocol. The Subcommittee also recommends that records be kept of all medical examinations of detainees, indicating the name of the doctor and the results of the examination.[14] The Istanbul Protocol must be used as an instrument for improving the quality of medical and psychological reports and strengthening the prevention of torture.**

C. Psychiatric hospital

95. The State party does not have any psychiatric units in its hospitals and patients are therefore systematically sent to the hospital in Melen, which is the only institution of the country to accommodate the mentally ill. Within the hospital, staff do not

[12] Approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolutions 663 C (XXIV) of 31 July 1957 and 2076 (LXII) of 13 May 1977.

[13] In accordance with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (Bangkok Rules), adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2010.

[14] Set of Principles, principle 26.

generally wear white coats and the patients have an open regime. Patients are generally accompanied all the time by a family member, which seems to have a positive effect on the treatment and, in particular, facilitates the patient's return and reintegration into the family and the community.

96. The Subcommittee is seriously concerned by the lethargic state of the patients it met, caused by the uniform and virtually systematic administration of high-dose neuroleptics (mainly Haldol). It notes that these treatments are administered without a thorough health check being conducted on admission and often without the prior consent of the patient or his or her family. The Subcommittee notes that the drug treatment of patients who are not enrolled in the National Health Insurance and Social Guarantees Fund is paid for entirely by the patients' families.

97. The Subcommittee is also concerned by the isolation cells used for patients during acute attacks, which have bars and do not have mattresses, so that the patients have to lie on the floor.

98. The Subcommittee is alarmed by the unacceptable living conditions in the closed ward of Melen hospital, where the sanitary conditions are extremely poor, there is a putrid smell of faeces and there are no showers or furniture, notably mattresses or beds. It also notes the report received during its visit that the Governor of Libreville sometimes asks for "stray people" to be "rounded up" and placed without their consent in the isolation ward of the psychiatric hospital. The Subcommittee notes that patients held in the ward are sometimes detained for several months in inhuman and degrading conditions that can be construed as torture.

99. **The Subcommittee recommends that living conditions in Melen psychiatric hospital be improved and that the closed ward be shut down immediately. It calls on the authorities to establish clear procedures for decisions to place a patient in an isolation cell. The Subcommittee also recommends that a multidisciplinary approach be adopted when developing treatment plans, which must be adapted to each patient, and that the doses of neuroleptic drugs be kept to what is strictly necessary. The medical treatment of patients who are not registered with the National Health Insurance and Social Guarantees Fund should be paid for by the hospital. It also recommends that sufficient human and financial resources be allocated to the mental health sector, more qualified psychiatrists be recruited and hospital facilities be equipped with adequate infrastructure for both leisure and work.**

100. **The Subcommittee also recommends that the authorities adopt a mental health policy in line with the obligations assumed on ratification in 2007 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and develop a national strategic plan to that effect.**

VII. Repercussions of the visit and conclusion

Repercussions of the visit

101. In some of the places visited, including Libreville and Port-Gentil criminal investigation departments, the fear of reprisals was ubiquitous. The Subcommittee noted on several occasions that detainees were afraid to express themselves freely with the delegation and some even claimed that they would certainly be subjected to ill-treatment for having talked to the Subcommittee members.

102. The Subcommittee also fears that disciplinary action might be taken against the Commander of Port-Gentil central police station, who — without the consent of his

superior — took the initiative to cooperate with the Subcommittee and to grant it access to the detainees.

103. The Subcommittee wishes to remind the State party that all forms of intimidation and reprisals against persons deprived of their liberty constitute violations of its obligations under the Optional Protocol. The Subcommittee requests that the authorities of Gabon ensure that no reprisals are exacted after its visit and that the State party provide detailed information on the steps taken to prevent and hinder the taking of reprisals against staff members or detainees who spoke to members of the Subcommittee.

Conclusion

104. The Subcommittee recalls that this report represents only the first stage of a constructive dialogue with the Gabonese authorities on the above-mentioned challenges.

105. **The Subcommittee requests the Gabonese Government to reply, within six months of the date of transmission of the present report, with details of the measures taken by the State party to follow up on its recommendations. The State party is asked to respond to the specific requests for information made by the Subcommittee in this report and to authorize its publication.**

Annexe I

[*Français uniquement*]

Lieux de privation de liberté visités par le SPT

Gendarmeries

- Direction Générale des Recherches (DGR), Libreville
- Compagnie de Libreville /Compagnie de l'Estuaire
- Compagnie de Port-Gentil
- Brigade de Lambaréné
- Brigade de Bifoun

Commissariats de police

- Province de l'Estuaire
- Commissariat de Police du V^{ème} Arrondissement (Lalala)
- Commissariat Central de Police d'Owendo
- Commissariat Central de Police de Libreville (Préfecture de police)
- Commissariat de police de Kembo
- Bureaux de la police judiciaire (PJ) de Libreville, Port-Gentil et Lambaréné
- Office central de lutte anti-drogue
- Province de l'Ogooué-Maritime
- Commissariat Central (Port-Gentil)
- Bureau de la police judiciaire (PJ) à Port-Gentil
- Province de l'Ogooué-Moyenne
- Commissariat Central de Lambaréné
- Commissariat d'Isaac de Lambaréné
- Bureau de la police judiciaire (PJ) à Lambaréné

Prisons

- Prison centrale de Libreville
- Prison centrale de Port-Gentil
- Prison civile de Lambaréné

Institution psychiatrique

- Hôpital Psychiatrique de Melen, Libreville

Centres de rétention

- Direction Générale de la Documentation et de l'Immigration, Libreville
- Direction Générale de la Documentation et de l'Immigration, Port-Gentil

Forces armées gabonaises

- Direction Générale des Contres Ingérences et de la Sécurité Militaire de Port-Gentil
- Base militaire de la Marine de Port-Gentil

Annexe II

[*Français uniquement*]

Liste des personnes rencontrées par le SPT

I. Autorités

Ministère des Affaires Etrangères

- S.E.M. Alfred Moungara Moussotsi, Directeur Général des Affaires Etrangères
- M. Rahim J. Nguimbi, Chef de Division des Traités multilatéraux
- M. Fernand Yalis, Chef de Division des Nations Unies
- Mme Virginie Koumba Boussougou : Chargée d'Etudes à la Direction Générale des Affaires Etrangères
- Mme Marjorie Mbazogho : Chargée d'Etudes à la Direction Générale des Affaires Etrangères
- Mme Anouchka Mvou Louba Ialegue : Chargée d'Etudes à la Direction Générale des Affaires Etrangères

Ministère de la Justice et des Droits Humains

- Mme Edna Paola Biyogou epse Minko : Directeur de la Promotion des Droits humains
- M. Guy Kebila-Birinda : Conseiller du Ministre de la Justice, Gardes des Sceaux
- M. François Mangari : Conseiller du Ministre de la Justice, Gardes des Sceaux
- Général Mohamed Mandza : Commandant en Chef de la Sécurité pénitentiaire
- Mme Nding Muetse : Procureur adjointe au Tribunal de Première Instance de Libreville
- M. Anicet-Gervais Ondo Nguema : Directeur de la Protection des Droits humains

Ministère de l'Intérieur

- M. Paul Bovis Ngome Ayong : Secrétaire Général adjoint 1Ministère de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense Nationale

- Lieutenant Juste-Arsène Emboubadi : Chef du Service de l'emploi Ministère des Affaires Etrangères

Ministère de la Santé, Centre National de Santé Mentale

- Dr. Alexandre Okouni D'Omenilt : Directeur Général du Centre Nationale de santé mentale

II. Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme

- M. Etienne L. Boudzanga
- Mme Marie-Louise Enie
- M. Joseph Ondo Eva

- M. Bertrand Homa Moussavou
- M. Alphonse Ndimangoye-Nguenegue
- Mgr Patrick Nguema Edou
- P[r] Guy Rossatanga-Rignault
- Mme Marie-Anne Quenum épouse Mboga

III. Organismes des Nations Unies

- Équipe de l'ONU au Gabon (UNCT)
- UNICEF
- UNHCR

IV. Société civile

- Association de lutte contre les crimes rituels
- Centre pour la promotion de la démocratie et la défense des droits de l'homme au Gabon (CDDH-Gabon)
- Cri des femmes
- Défense sociale repensée
- Humanité avant tout (HUMAT)
- Jeunesse sans frontières
- Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains au Gabon (REDDHGA)
- Réseau des Organisations Libres de la société civile pour la Bonne Gouvernance au Gabon (ROLBG)